



Office of the Governor

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights
Protecting the Rights of Louisiana's Citizens
Since 1988

Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

-Robert F. Kennedy

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“People find themselves in a bad spot and need some assistance, assistance that because of the nature of their cases, they had no alternative for resolution. They turned to what should be the first line of defense for Human and Civil Rights, our state and local governments.”

*Rodney C. Braxton, Esq.
Louisiana Commission on Human Rights
Executive Director, 1993-1996*



“The Office of the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights is an assurance and a commitment by the state of Louisiana that the intent of the values of ‘equality’ and ‘inalienable rights’ are maintained.”

*Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed.
Louisiana Commission on Human Rights
Executive Director, 1999-Present*



State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Dear Colleagues:

In 2015, our nation commemorated several significant human and civil rights events—the 150th anniversary of the passing of the 13th Amendment which abolished slavery; the 51th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act; and the 50th anniversaries of the Voting Rights Act and the laws which created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Medicare, Community Health Centers and Head Start programs. On June 24, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court passed the Marriage Equality Act. The impact of these landmark acts helped transform America into a country with greater equality and expanded access to employment, education and health care for all Americans, but more particularly for minorities and other disenfranchised persons.

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) was established in 1988 to safeguard Louisiana citizens from discriminatory practices through enforcement, education and advocacy. LCHR has worked diligently to ensure the protection against unfair treatment for all citizens of our state. Following several years of our advocacy, the Louisiana legislators in 2014 provided statutory coverage that protected employees against retaliation by employers.

This report highlights our achievements in fulfilling the state-mandated responsibilities of resolving claims, educating the public through outreach and conducting human rights advocacy. Since 1999, our office has resolved almost 1300 claims of discrimination. Our efforts have resulted in excess of 1.3 million dollars in settlements for Louisiana citizens. Through the years, we have been successful in maintaining our partnership with EEOC and continually meeting contractual requirements for resolutions and training participation. Funds generated through this contract enable us to hire Equal Opportunity Specialists, investigate claims, conduct outreach and sponsor educational events. The report also features our initiatives that address emergent human rights issues of special groups.

As we continue to protect human and civil rights, LCHR must respond to the challenges presented by increased racial and religious bias, and also the demographic and cultural shifts in our state. As the official Louisiana entity mandated to process charges of discrimination, investigate discriminatory acts, mediate disputes and provide education and training related to discriminatory practices, LCHR is committed to answering the call to action by preparing our agency to respond to the many human rights challenges ahead with a renewed commitment to end inequality and promote access to fair treatment for all.

With warm regards,

Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed.
Executive Director

Louisiana Commission on Human Rights

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights is the official entity mandated to process charges of discrimination, investigate alleged discriminatory acts, mediate disputes and provide education and training about discriminatory practices.

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) was established in 1988 by Act 866 in the 1988 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and has been operating since 1993. LCHR is authorized by LSA-R.S. 23:301 et seq. as amended, cited as the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law to handle discrimination based upon race, color, sex, age, disability, national origin, sickle cell trait or pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions.

This office is also authorized by LSA-R.S. 51:2231 et seq. as amended to handle complaints of banking and lending, and public accommodation discriminatory practices.

In 2002, the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights was given additional enforcement authority relative to breastfeeding. LSA-R.S. 2247.1 stipulates: a mother may breastfeed her baby in any place of public accommodation, resort, or amusement in an effort to maintain family values and infant health demands. Any direct or indirect act or practice of exclusion,

distinction, restriction, segregation, limitation, refusal, denial, or any other act or practice of differentiation or preference in treatment of a mother breastfeeding is discrimination.

In 2014, Louisiana Legislators passed two laws related to employment discrimination. LA S 322— expanded the Equal Pay for Women Act. LA S 412— extended the definition of discriminatory practice in employment to include veterans into the classes previously covered.

Louisiana Revised Statute section 51:2256 prohibits retaliation against an individual who has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law.

Worksharing Agreement between EEOC and LCHR

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights is a designated Fair Employment Practices Agency (FEPA) and, through a Worksharing

Agreement, works with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to avoid duplication in processing employment discrimination complaints. LCHR was first designated as a FEPA in 1993 through a Memorandum of Understanding between EEOC and LCHR.

In 1994, LCHR was designated as a 706 Agency with EEOC, enabling LCHR to receive federal funding. Later that year, LCHR and EEOC signed their first Worksharing Agreement. In 1995, LCHR received initial EEOC funding of \$55,000 upon its designation as a FEPA. It was not until 2002 when a formal contract was signed with EEOC for LCHR to investigate employment discrimination cases.

After Mr. Braxton resigned in 1996, LCHR operated without an appointed Executive Director. During this time, the agency accepted cases, but no investigations were conducted. Soon after her appointment as Executive Director in 1999, Loyce Pierce Wright was successful in reestablishing a closer relationship with EEOC and maintaining LCHR's FEPA status and the Worksharing Agreement. She also focused on meeting contract requirements.

The EEOC contract required that LCHR investigate cases that meet the standards set forth in the EEOC Contracting Principles, reimbursed LCHR for investigative and intake services that meet these, and also mandated that LCHR staff members attend EEOC-sponsored trainings and the annual FEPA conference. From 2002, with the exception of 2005 when Hurricane Katrina dispersed its staff, LCHR has met the EEOC contract requirements in terms of closings and participation in EEOC-required trainings.

To ensure compliance with EEOC standards, LCHR initiated several quality improvement actions. A comprehensive manual was created to train staff in the investigative and resolution processes. The manual includes descriptions of statutes, theories of discrimination, types of resolutions and proof requirements. It provides sample forms and outlines the case file organization and checklist. Prior to the transition of the file to EEOC, the custodian

is required to initial and date each item verifying the presence and maintenance of all documents.

Resolutions

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights resolved 1,235 complaints of discrimination from January 1, 1999 through September 30, 2015. The majority (70%) of resolutions had race or color as the basis for discrimination, followed by disability at 14%, age discrimination at 7%, and others at 4% or less.

Of resolutions issued, 888 (70%) were No Cause determinations in which LCHR was unable to conclude that the information obtained established violations of the statutes. This did not certify that the respondent was in compliance with the statutes. No finding was made as to any other issues that might be construed as having been raised by the charge.

Administrative resolutions totaled 216. These were closed prior to investigation, usually because one or more of the criteria had not been met. There were 55 With Cause resolutions. Methods of relief included 99 non-monetary conciliations and monetary settlements. There were 88 settlements resulting in individual benefits totaling \$1,384,213.

RESOLUTIONS		
<div>1235</div> <div>Total Resolutions</div> <div>January 1, 1999-September 30, 2015</div>	Top three basis of discrimination of the total resolutions:	
	Basis of Discrimination	Number
	RACE OR COLOR	70%
	DISABILITY	14%
	AGE	7%
<div>\$1,384,213</div> <div>January 1, 1999 - September 30, 2015</div>		Received by 89 individuals

WOMEN LEADERS PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY

Meet with LCHR Staff



The leaders were invited to the United States under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. Their program was arranged by the Institute of International Education. They met with LCHR staff to learn how women leaders and organizations actively engage in mediating conflicts and disputes arising from socioeconomic, ethnic, religious and regional differences. During the meeting, LCHR staff familiarized the visitors with constitutional, judicial and legislative processes and practices that promote gender equality and protect women's human rights.

Back Row, L-R: Horetense Belemsigri (Staff Sergeant, Armed Forces, BURKINA FASO), Nana Nti (Faculty Coordinator, KAIPTC, GHANA), Nagla Aboh (Director, Peace Studies and Research Center of Nyala University, SUDAN), Anna Jones (Acting National Network Coordinator, WANEP, GAMBIA), Khady Tendeng (Project Manager, Concern Universal, SENEGAL), Ninette Umurerwa (National Executive Security, Haguruka NGO, RWANDA), John Allen (EOS, LCHR), Sicily Gatiti (Deputy Officer, National Police Service Commission, KENYA), Sitabile "Star" Dewa (Programs Manager, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, ZIMBABWE), Desha Gay (LCHR, EOS), Renata Mzinga, (Lindi Regional Police Commander, Police Force, TANZANIA), Christa Davis (Administrative Assistant/ Intake Officer, LCHR), Mireille "Amani" Kahatwa (Head of Projects, ABA, CONGO), Iriane Lee (EOS, LCHR).

Front Row, L-R: Marlene Miller (Executive Assistant/EOS Supervisor, LCHR), Tenin Kissira (Police Commissioner, Domestic Surveillance/Border Police Unit, IVORY COAST), Tsholofelo Sesanga (Community Interventions Manager, Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, SOUTH AFRICA), Loyce Pierce Wright (Executive Director, LCHR), Marie Blandine Songuelema (President, Assoc. for Female Lawyers of the CAR), Minfantibe "Mathilde" Kantati (Social Worker, Minister of Social Action, Women's Promotion and Literacy).

OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

According to state statute, the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights is required to “cooperate with the community, professional groups, and governmental agencies in the development of public information programs and activities in the interest of equal opportunity and treatment of all individuals. It is also charged with fostering goodwill and promoting human rights throughout the state through education and other means.”

Community education and outreach programs serve as vehicles to increase understanding of discriminatory practices and raise awareness about the agency and its services. LCHR has designed and participated in programs targeting legal, corporate, governmental, and business entities with seminars, presentations and other educational initiatives. Through exhibits, conferences, and programs, LCHR has highlighted key events in the civil rights struggle, recognized the contributions of courageous leaders and promoted civil rights access for all.

These activities have been supplemented by publications and supported by an updated LCHR website. In total, these initiatives have

enabled LCHR to increase the depth and breadth of its penetration to diverse groups throughout the state.

Though challenged by insufficient state funding to support extensive outreach and education, LCHR is committed to exhausting every opportunity to advance human rights to the citizens of the state. This approach has led LCHR to spearhead outreach and host seminars on its own, as well as partner with local, state, and federal agencies and other groups who share the commitment to foster human rights, reduce discriminatory practices and educate the public. The following pages show examples of outreach and educational activities that illustrate these efforts.

Outreach and Education

Roundtable Discussions

LCHR conducted a series of discussions with human resources directors from small and large businesses, provided trainings related to investigative procedures, mediation processes, and supervisory information pertinent to discriminatory practices.

Community Outreach Forums

Beginning in 2000, LCHR joined efforts with EEOC, other agencies, and community-based organizations to conduct community outreach forums to heighten awareness about issues related to employment, housing, lending practices and other human rights issues. These forums were held in Lafayette, Shreveport, Alexandria, Lake Charles, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge. Numerous community, business and media groups provided valuable support by helping to organize, promote and co-sponsor events.

Outreach to the Legal Community

LCHR has presented two Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs targeting attorneys, other legal professionals, and representatives from law enforcement agencies. The objectives of these educational programs have been to impart information about LCHR and its functions and to provide recent information about discriminatory practices related to employment, lending and public accommodations. The December 2003/January 2004 issue of the Louisiana Bar Journal featured a lengthy article entitled: **Louisiana Commission on Human Rights: Committed to Protecting Citizens from Discriminatory Practices**. More recently, LCHR offered CLEs at the Celebrating 50 Years of Civil Rights Conference discussed below. Through the combination of educational conferences, focused articles, and meetings with law school deans, LCHR has made significant inroads in educating legal professionals.

Commemorating Civil Rights Events

Efforts to spotlight and recognize civil rights milestones in American history are deeply rooted in LCHR's commitment to increase

awareness about its role and to educate the larger community on human right issues.

A Century of Civil Rights Exhibit

This exhibit featured a composition of twelve panels each presenting a decade of historical civil rights activities beginning with the Niagara Movement in 1905 and continuing with the Civil Rights Movement though 2005. It was first displayed in 2005 and again at the 2007 Essence Music festivals in the Morial Convention Center. To create the exhibit, Loyce Pierce Wright who served as executive producer, brought together Keith Weldon Medley as researcher and writer; as designer, Charles E. Siler, Program Curator of the Louisiana State Museum and Jeffery May, consultant.

Brown versus Board of Education- Commemoration Celebration: May 17, 1954 - May 17, 2004

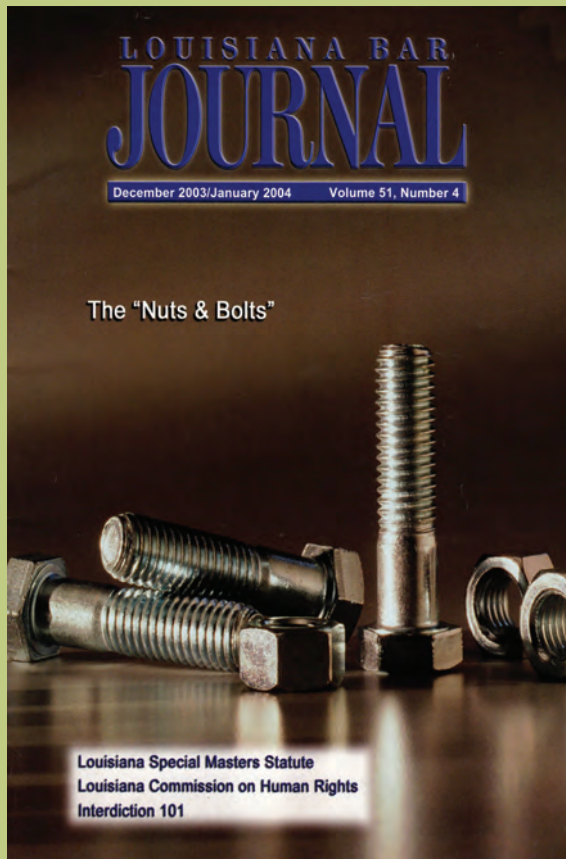
LCHR hosted two events recognizing the 50th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court's decision that struck down separate but equal education in public schools.

Major features of the celebration were a talk on preserving civil rights in Louisiana by Keith Weldon Medley, author of *We as Freeman: Plessy v. Ferguson* and presentations honoring the McDonogh Three – Gail Etienne Netters; Tessie Prevost Williams and Leona Tate—who, along with Ruby Bridges, integrated public schools in New Orleans in November 1960. Sponsoring organizations included: NAACP-New Orleans Branch; Louisiana Commission on Human Rights; Louisiana State Museum/Louisiana Civil Rights Museum; and the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center.

A Change Gonna Come: In observance of the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington

On August 22, 2013, the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights teamed with the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Advisory Board and the Friends of the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum to present a two-hour program at the U. S. Mint in New Orleans. The inspirational program was interspersed with performances of songs from the Civil Rights Movement and presentations

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The McDonogh Three



Tessie Prevost, left, Leona Tate and Gail Etienne were known as the 'McDonogh 3', who along with Ruby Bridges, were the first black students to integrate public schools in New Orleans in 1960. Image by Ted Jackson, The Times-Picayune

A CIVIL RIGHTS century

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights invites you on a journey through "A Civil Rights Century." This exhibit commemorates the centennial of the Niagara Movement of 1905 and its lasting impact on Civil Rights movements of the twentieth century. The exhibit consists of 12 panels. Each panel covers approximately a decade in the "Civil Rights Century". Using words from the Niagara Movement's Statement of Principles, we can see how their sentiments provided a beacon and a blueprint for Civil Rights organizations such as the NAACP, National Urban League, A. Philip Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Congress of Racial Equality, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and many others.

The next year, 1906, instead of meeting in secret, we met openly at Harper's Ferry, the scene of John Brown's raid... We made pilgrimage at dawn bare-footed to the scene of Brown's martyrdom and we talked one of the plainest English that had been witnessed by black men in America.

"Address to the Country"

Issued at second conference, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, 1906

[Excerpts]

"We want full manhood suffrage, and we want it now, henceforth and forever.

Second. We want discrimination in public accommodation to cease...

Third. We claim the right of freemen to walk, talk, and be with them that wish to be with us.

Fourth. We want the laws enforced against rich as well as poor; against Capitalist as well as Laborer; against white as well as black...

Fifth. We want our children educated...

These are some of the chief things which we want. How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote, by persistent, unceasing agitation, by hammering at the truth, by sacrifice and work..."

Niagara Movement - Harper's Ferry 1906

1940's Tuskegee Army men flew through racial barriers during World War II.

1947 CORE members begin "The Journey of Reconciliation" (a bus ride through the South to protest segregation)

1950 McLaurin v. Oklahoma

1955 Montgomery Improvement Association

1963 March on Washington

Black is not a Vice
NOR - SEPARATION - NOT

1964 Civil Rights Act

1965 Selma to Montgomery

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about significant civil rights events. Presenters discussed boycotts and other civil rights activities in Louisiana and Washington D. C., highlighting the bus boycott and Southern University student unrest in Baton Rouge, demonstrations in Shreveport, Deacons for Defense, New Orleans School Desegregation, and the pivotal March on Washington, August 28, 1963.

Celebrating 50 Years of Civil Rights—From History to Fate: Protecting the Rights of All Citizens

In June 2015, LCHR hosted a one day conference focusing on the historical context and current national debate surrounding the protection of rights of all citizens.

The conference's timing and topics were opportune. Less than a week earlier, the Supreme Court announced its decision on same sex marriage; and almost two weeks before the conference, nine African Americans were killed in a South Carolina church. The shooting was classified as a hate crime.

Nearly 200 persons attended the conference, which focused on four key topics: Civil and Voting Rights; Immigration; Access, Equality and Protection for the LGBT Community; and Profiling in Law Enforcement Settings.

Expert presenters and panelists from around the United States covered issues central to conference topics during the plenary session, keynote address, panel discussions with questions and answer periods, and breakout sessions.

Opening plenary speaker, David Dennis, civic rights activist and former Mississippi Director of Congress of Racial Equality, gave an historical overview and an update on the Civil Rights Movement and Voting Rights Act. He shared his experiences as a civil rights activist and as a Freedom Rider during the most turbulent days of the civil rights struggle.

The Honorable Edwin A. Lombard, Judge Louisiana 4th Circuit Court of Appeals gave the keynote address. Judge Lombard provided personal reflection of his work as a civil rights activist in relationship to existing segregation laws and the political climate of separate but equal.

LGBT panel along with LCHR staff and commissioner



(L-R) Front Row: Martin "Marty" Ebel, Esq. (Acting District Director of the Houston District Office of EEOC); Judge Steven Reed (Montgomery, AL Probate Judge); Synthia Taylor (SW Region, US Dept. of Justice, Community Relations); Wesley Ware (Founder and Director of BreakOUT!); (Back Row) Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed. (Executive Director, LCHR); Deron F. Ogletree (Supervisory Special Agent, FBI); and Angela Faulk (LCHR Commissioner, 7th Congressional District).

Immigration Reform Panel Attendees



Profiling in Law Enforcing Settings Panel



(L-R) James J. Carter, Esq. (Managing Partner, James J. Carter Law Firm); Dr. Alex del Carme, Federal Monitor, U.S. District Court for Eastern District of LA); Linda Sarsour (Executive Director, Arab American Association of NY); Loyce Wright, M.Ed. (Executive Director, LCHR); Superintendent Michael Harrison (Superintendent of Police, New Orleans); Rev. Thomas Watson, MSW (Pastor, Watson Memorial Teaching Ministries).

Immigration Panel



(L-R) Jennifer Rizzo, Esq. (National Pro Bono Project Counsel); Keith Hill, Esq. (Director, EEOC of New Orleans); Kathleen Gasparian, Esq. (Founder, Gasparian Immigration); Dr. Susan Mary Weishar (Migration Specialist Fellow); Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed. (Executive Director, LCHR); Tamara Jacobson, Esq. (Chairwoman, LCHR); Martin Guterrez (Division Director, Catholic Charities)



(L-R) Keynote speaker, Judge Edwin Lombard (State of Louisiana, Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals); Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed. (Executive Director, LCHR); and Judge Kern Reese (New Orleans Civil District Court).



Rodney Braxton, Esq. President Southern Strategy Group, Louisiana and plenary speaker David Dennis, Sr., Esq. former Mississippi Director of Congress of Racial Equality.

Advocacy

In the fight for human justice, a few committed persons can make a difference. That is why LCHR has used the power and credibility of its office, staff and commissioners to join others in advocacy efforts that support human rights causes.

In fall 2002, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights invited representatives of civil rights and human rights agencies to the Mississippi Advisory Committee's fact finding meeting in Jackson, Mississippi. The meeting was co-sponsored by Mississippi State Senator Alice Varnado Harden, District 28. Mississippi is one of only two states without an official human rights commission.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
2002 Mississippi Advisory Committee's Fact-finding Meeting



L. to R.: LCHR Commissioner Rodney Braxton, Dr. Mary Frances Berry, Chairperson of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and Loyce Pierce Wright, LCHR Executive Director

Rodney C. Braxton and Loyce Pierce Wright shared the history of LCHR and experiences in becoming a viable, functioning agency. They also provided an overview of Louisiana's state statutes prohibiting discriminatory practices.

In 2003, LCHR worked with the Alexandria Human Rights Commission to conduct a day-long conference with participation from the Justice Department, fair housing agencies and others entities.

In May 2003, LCHR co-sponsored the *"No Woman Left Behind"* Conference, which focused on policy issues pertaining to women. Held in Baton Rouge, about 100 women, including legislators and gubernatorial candidates, participated in conference discussions on topics, such as housing, health care, education and economic development.

In 2004, LCHR helped to revitalize the New Orleans chapter of the NAACP, an agency that had lost its active status in 2001 and was operating under the direction of a temporary administrator, Mrs. Rupert Richardson, also a LCHR Commission member. Mrs. Richardson and Executive Director, Loyce Pierce Wright helped locate meeting space, facilitate meetings with key leaders and garner financial contributions. With broad support from major political, community and corporate leaders, the NAACP held its first election for president in early 2005.

Following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands Louisianans, Leah R. Raby, Executive Assistant and Christa Davis, Administrative Assistant/Intake Officer participated in Tours of Encouragement that brought hope, resource information and listening ears to evacuees in shelters across the state.

Also, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many displaced citizens sought assistance from relatives and friends. LCHR was contacted by a citizen who was living with a niece. The niece received an eviction notice from the landlord citing a violation of the lease because of the increased number of individuals living in the dwelling. LCHR contacted the Attorney General's office which shortly thereafter issued an order barring such evictions.

Addressing Emergent Human Rights Issues

LCHR has identified several population groups who have challenges that can impede their access to accurate information about their human rights. These groups include Immigrants, Incarcerated persons and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Each of these groups is faced with obstacles that may hamper their access to information that can help reduce discrimination, such as cultural and linguistic barriers, lack of access to information, and social stigma. In response, LCHR has been promoting the advancement of human rights for these special groups.

Immigrants

Boosted by a large number of Latino immigrants who came to rebuild devastated communities following the 2005 hurricanes, the Latino share of Louisiana's population grew to almost 5% in 2013. According to the U.S. Census, the number of foreign born persons in Louisiana totaled 182,559. LCHR is working to inform these individuals about laws prohibiting discrimination related to employment, citizenship, national origin and other areas. To accomplish this objective, LCHR partners with groups whose mission is working with immigrants such as the Pro Bono Project and Catholic Charities. LCHR will also share brochures with Louisiana Immigration and Employment attorneys and others that offer legal assistance to immigrants.

In 2013, LCHR staff attended an EEOC-sponsored training designed to raise awareness and increase understanding of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

At the June 2015 conference celebrating 50 years of civil rights, immigration reform was a major topic area. Using the LCHR website (<http://www.lchrgov.com/lchr/>) consumers may obtain a Spanish version of the intake questionnaire.

Incarcerated Individuals

According to the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, approximately 15,000 state offenders are released annually, most of them returning to their home communities. They may be unfamiliar with recent laws covering discrimination and their rights related to hiring processes, housing accommodations, public benefits, and others. To address these needs, the Commission designed the LCHR Reentry Program on Human and Civil Rights Laws & Job Placement Strategies for Incarcerated Individuals to provide additional knowledge about discriminatory practices and laws prohibiting discrimination. In doing so, it is hoped that a better understanding will enhance their reentry success.

From March to October 2015, Happy Johnson, Equal Opportunity Specialist and LCHR Re-entry Trainer, conducted ten training sessions at eight state and one Parish correctional facilities. They are as follows:

Correctional Facility	Location
Allen Correctional Center	Kinder
Angola State Penitentiary	Angola
Avoyelles Center	Cottonport
Dixon Correctional Institute	Jackson
Hunt Correction Center	St. Gabriel
Louisiana Institute for Women	St. Gabriel
Rayburn Correctional Center	Angie
Wade Correctional Center	Homer
Orleans Parish Prison	New Orleans

The first half of the presentation focused on educating the inmates about: (1) LCHR as a state enforcement agency of employment discrimination laws with investigatory powers and provisions; (2) the role of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as an entity working to increase the hiring of formerly incarcerated individuals; (3) the functions and potentially positive impact of Ban-the-Box Laws on local jurisdictions such as Orleans Parish; (4) and how the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) can benefit companies as well as inmates within one year of their release.

The second part of each training presentation focused on: (5) equipping inmates with nine primary pre-employment action steps to complete while incarcerated; (6) the difficult task of discussing criminal

history during actual job interviews; and (7) reliable job resources throughout the state that can be effective pathways toward personal and professional stability.

More than 900 inmates attended the LCHR reentry trainings. Survey data revealed that the majority of inmates have virtually no college education: on average, only about 9% of all inmates had attended college. Almost 50% of inmates had at least 1 or 2 children. About 95% found the training helpful and 84% affirmed that they were interested in receiving more training on the subject matter.

"I now know my rights as an ex-offender concerning jobs and being hired."

LCHR Reentry Training Participant

LGBT Communities

It is recognized that individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are more likely to experience intolerance, discrimination, harassment and threats of violence than do persons who identify themselves as heterosexual. The lack of uniform federal and state laws protecting LGBT individuals makes enforcement challenging. Despite the challenges, LCHR has committed to being an agency where all persons feel comfortable, are treated with respect and have access to accurate, up to date information regarding their rights.

LCHR used several methods to achieve this objective. The recent civil rights conference included a session entitled: Access, Equality and Protection for LGBT. In addition, through EEOC trainings, LCHR enhanced its cultural competency about LGBT definitions, attitudes and workforce challenges. As an example, LCHR staff members attended the EEOC sponsored training entitled: Investigating and Litigating LGBT Cases in December 2015.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has.”

Margaret Mead

Partnership Development

LCHR is mindful of its responsibility to enforce the state’s laws prohibiting discrimination and to inform and educate the public about discriminatory practices. With the understanding that one agency cannot do this work alone, LCHR established effective partnerships and working relationships with agencies and companies that share a common mission.

These formal and informal relationships have enabled LCHR to leverage resources that are mutually beneficial to all parties. In some cases, partners provided staff expertise and time, and collaborated on special projects, conferences, exhibits and meetings.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATORS Federal Government

- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission - New Orleans Field Office and Houston District Office
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U. S. Civil Rights Commission
- U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Louisiana
- SBA Regulatory Fairness Board and National Ombudsmen

State Government

- Louisiana Civil Rights Museum- Advisory Board
- Louisiana State Museum
- Louisiana Department of Labor
- Louisiana Attorney General Office’s Civil Division

Local Government

- Shreveport Human Relations Commission
- Alexandria Human Relations Commission
- New Orleans Human Relations Commission

Other Partners

- Catholic Charities
- NAACP- New Orleans and Shreveport Chapters
- Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
- Lafayette City-Parish Council
- Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center
- YWCA - New Orleans and Shreveport
- Society for Human Resource Management
- International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies
- Numerous churches and community-based organizations

Race: Are We So Different?®



- » The traveling exhibition was sponsored by the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Advisory Board, LCHR and seven other organizations.
- » It was housed at the Old U.S. Mint in New Orleans from June 3 through September 25, 2011, and had been on tour since 2007.
- » The exhibit was a project of the American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota. It was the first national exhibition to tell the story of race from biological, cultural and historical points of view. Combined, these perspectives offered an unprecedented look at race and racism in the United States.
- » Over 2000 visitors attended the New Orleans showings.

RACE: A Millennial Generation's Perspective

Race: A Millennial Generation's Perspective was a series of roundtable discussion with more than 50 student leaders from 12 public and private colleges and universities across Louisiana. Held in conjunction with the Race exhibit at the Old U. S. Mint, the symposiums were designed to gain insight on race relations from millennials who represent the largest and most ethnically and racially diverse generational segment of our nation. As future leaders of America, their attitudes, understanding and comfort with addressing race will help impact positive change for the future.

Each three-hour session included students of multiracial backgrounds. Session One, conducted at Dillard University in New Orleans, included students from Dillard University, Xavier University, Loyola University, Tulane University and Delgado Community College. Session Two, conducted at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, garnered students from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, McNeese State University and South Louisiana Community College. Session Three, conducted at Grambling State University, brought together students from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, Louisiana State University at Shreveport, Louisiana Tech University and Grambling.

A synopsis of the discussion objectives and student responses showed the following:

- » 82% had increased awareness and understanding of race issues in America.
- » 54% experienced a change in attitude around race.
- » 90% would participate in further dialogue.

Many participants indicated concrete actions they would do to improve race relations.

The discussions were a collaborative effort of the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights and the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum.

Lilly Ledbetter Addresses the 2010 EEOC FEPA Conference



L to R: Jacqueline Ann Berrien, Lilly Ledbetter and Loyce Pierce Wright. Ms. Berrien served as Chair of the EEOC from 2009 – 2014 under President Obama.

Executive Director Wright had the honor of introducing Mrs. Lilly Ledbetter who gave the keynote address entitled: "The Lilly Ledbetter - Fair Pay Act of 2009." During her presentation, Mrs. Ledbetter discussed her sexual discrimination charge against the Goodyear Tire Company, the Supreme Court's decision, and the significance of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

When she retired from Goodyear Tire Company, Mrs. Ledbetter learned that she had been paid much less than her male counterparts. She filed a charge with the EEOC in Alabama who gave her a "Right to Sue." Ledbetter sued claiming pay discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal

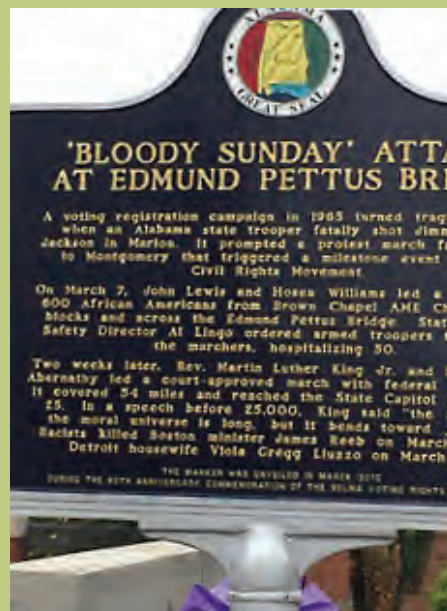
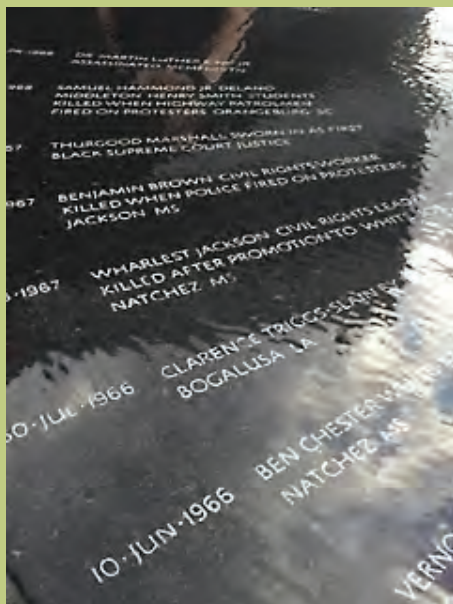
Pay Act of 1963. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Mrs. Ledbetter did not file the claim within the 180-day statutory period, but not whether it was discrimination. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, the first bill signed into law by President Barrack Obama, superseded the Supreme Court's decision.

LCHR Hosts International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies Annual Conferences in 2002 and 2012

The International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies has as its mission safeguarding the human rights of all people. Its membership includes human rights agencies across the nation and also Canadian providences, Bermuda and Ghana who are responsible for enforcing human rights and civil rights laws in their jurisdictions. LCHR has been an IAOHRA member since 2000. Each year, IAOHRA holds an annual educational conference of its membership, featuring plenary sessions, workshops, entertainment and networking opportunities. LCHR successfully bid to serve as host agency in 2002 and ten years later in 2012.

Strengthening Our Network for Human Rights was the theme for the 2012 IAOHRA Conference held in New Orleans, August 5-8, 2012. The conference encouraged participants as human rights leaders to engage and connect with peers. Each day focused on different topics which included: Civil Rights and Human Rights, August 6th; Housing on August 7, and Employment on August 8th. Each day included a plenary session.

The 2015 IAOHRA annual conference was held in Birmingham, Alabama, The conference highlighted the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and included tours of Alabama cities which played a significant role in the civil rights movement: Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham.



Commissioners and Staff

The LCHR Board of Commissioners executes state-mandated anti-discriminatory laws. This nine-member board and an executive director constitute the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights. Commission members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Louisiana State Senate on a bipartisan basis, one from each Congressional district, with the remaining membership appointed at large to serve three-year terms. Commissioners may continue to serve until reappointed or replaced. The Governor selects one of the appointees to serve as Commission chair.



"It is my philosophy that the quality of life in our State can be measured by the fact that the people feel they have adequate protection to live with the assurance that their basic rights are being protected.

I have been on the commission for about fifteen years. I have watched the commission endure and become a reliable resource for the people of Louisiana. I am very proud that I was afforded the opportunity to be a part of this commission. When I see how proud my children are that I have served in this capacity I know that it was an incredibly worthwhile experience.

Each commissioner treated his or her role on the commission with great reverence and respected the fact that the people that came to the commission for help deserved everyone's best effort. The commissioners and myself, in particular, were so proud to be a part of this group which has always been led by devoted and incredibly hard working professional staff. The professional staff of this commission have worked countless hours and have exceeded the scope of their jobs in order to protect the rights of the people of Louisiana."

Tamara Jacobson, Chairwoman

COMMISSION MEMBERS 2015



Tamara Jacobson, Esq.
Chairwoman
At-large member



Angela K. Faulk
7th Congressional District



Terrence G. Ginn
4th Congressional District



Rev. Willie Louis Littleton
2nd Congressional District



Rev. Cyril A. Verret
3rd Congressional District

Vacant Commissioner Positions

At-Large

1st Congressional District

5th Congressional District

6th Congressional District

Commission Members, 1988 to Present

Karen Ashford, Baton Rouge, 2008

Maria Auzenne, New Orleans, 1993 to 1996

Rodney C. Braxton, Esquire, New Orleans, 1999 to 2008

Marshall Brumfield, Folsom, 2008 to 2013

Jacques J. Detiege, New Orleans, 1999 to 2007

Judy Durham, Shreveport, 1993 to 1994

Angela K. Faulk, Abbeville, 2008 to present

Lenora Green, Baton Rouge, 1993 to 1996

Terrence G. Ginn, Baton Rouge, 2010 to present

Tamara K. Jacobson, Esq., New Orleans, 1999 to present

Eursla D. Hardy, Shreveport, 2008 to 2013

Anne Zoller Kiefer, New Orleans, 1993 to 2008

Clifton L. Lemelle, Sr., Eunice, 1993 to 2004

Luke D. Lucas, New Iberia, 1993 to 1999

Rev. Willie Louis Littleton, New Orleans, 2008 to present

James Meche, Opelousas, 2003 to 2008

Wilbert D. Pryor, Esquire, Shreveport, 1999 to 2008

Rupert F. Richardson, Baton Rouge, 1988 to 2005

Alvin Roche, Port Allen, 2008 to 2010, 2011

Scott Schmieding, Baton Rouge, 2008

Rev. James L. Stovall, Baton Rouge, 1993 to 1994

Rev. Cyril A. "Kirby" Verret, Houma, 2008 to present

Jesse Wilson, Jr., Plaquemine, 1993 to 1996

Louisiana Commission on Human Rights
Staff and Legal Advisor



Christa Davis, MPA
Administrative
Assistant/Intake Officer



Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed.
Executive Director



Marlene Miller
Executive Assistant/
Equal Opportunity
Specialist Supervisor



John Allen, J.D.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Desha Gay, J.D.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Felicia Hamilton, Esq.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Harry Landry, Esq.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Iriane Lee, J.D.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



James Roberts, J.D.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Erin Sanders, J.D.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist



Ta-Tanisha Youngblood, Esq.
Equal Opportunity
Specialist

Emily Andrews, Esq., Assistant Attorney General, Louisiana Attorney General's Office

In Recognition

Rodney Braxton, Esq.

First LCHR Executive Director and Long-term Commissioner



Rodney Braxton, Esq. President
Southern Strategy Group, Louisiana

"When I started at the Commission in November of 1993, my only thought was "I have to do my best at this." It was my first job out of law school and I appreciated the opportunity to use my training. Labor law was one of my favorites in law school but I quickly learned that this was not just about the law. This was about people. People who find themselves in a bad spot and need some assistance, assistance that because of the nature of these cases, they had no alternative for resolution. They turned to what should be the first line of defense for Human and Civil Rights, our state and local governments. This is the reason I have stayed involved and committed to this cause. Over the years I have received random calls from people I've helped in the past expressing thanks for helping them. To be honest, I don't usually remember them or their cases because of the sheer number I've seen, but the impact it seemed to have on them is what affects me the most. Even if we weren't able to help, we were there. That's why I stay involved and why the commission is so important.

A trailblazer, Mr. Braxton served as the first LCHR Executive Director from 1993 to 1996. He initiated the first Worksharing Agreement with EEOC, spearheaded LCHR's designations as a FEPA and 706 Agency. During his tenure, settlements totaled almost \$250,000. Mr. Braxton resigned as Executive Director, but remained active with LCHR as a commissioner from 1999 to 2008 and as an involved participant in LCHR sponsored events.

During the History to Fate Conference, Loyce Pierce Wright, LCHR Executive Director and Commission Chairwoman, Tamara Jacobson presented Mr. Braxton with a plaque acknowledging his contribution to LCHR. At the same conference they presented a plaque to Christa Davis, Administrative Assistant-Intake Officer with the inscription: "For 16 years of committed and dedicated service, Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, Office of the Governor 2015." Mrs. Wright also presented a plaque to Tamara Jacobson for her long-term tenure as LCHR chairwoman.

Commission Members

Executive Director Loyce Pierce Wright presented a plaque to Commissioners at the November 2015 meeting inscribed as follows: "In recognition of your outstanding service as a member of the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights, Office of the Governor, 2015"

Historical Timeline

1988

- LCHR established by state statute

1993

- LCHR receives first state appropriation of \$100,000
- Rodney C. Braxton appointed first LCHR executive director

1994

- LCHR designated as a FEPA

1995

- First Worksharing Agreement signed with EEOC
- LCHR receives EEOC funding of \$55,000
- Cases settled in excess of \$248,000

1996

- Legislative Audit issued a report outlining LCHR's noncompliance in several areas

1999

- LCHR transferred charges to EEOC in order to preserve the rights of those who had filed charges with LCHR
- Loyce Pierce Wright appointed LCHR executive director

2000

- Investigative unit established; policies and procedures developed
- Issued a State of the Commission Reports
- State funding increased to \$240,706

2002

- Signed contract with EEOC for 35 case investigations at \$400 each
- Conducted outreach in the eight major cities in partnership with EEOC
- Designed web-page and provided on-line information for filing a complaint
- Hosted the 54th annual conference of the International Association of Human Rights agencies

2003

- Conducted continuing legal education symposium
- Featured in the Louisiana Bar Journal
- Published the second State of the Commission report covering 1999-2003

2005

- Hosted Brown v Board of Education 50th anniversary program
- Debuted the 100 Years of Civil Rights exhibit at the Essence Music Festival
- Received EEOC annual public service commendation award

2006

- Loyce Pierce Wright delivered the keynote address at the International Human Rights Day Celebration in Yonkers, New York
- Hosted 21 representatives from 19 countries as a part of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program
- Participated in Tours of Encouragement

2010

- Loyce Pierce Wright introduced keynote presenter, Mrs. Lilly Ledbetter at the EEOC/FEPA annual conference

2011

- Co-sponsored RACE: Are We So Different? exhibit at the Old U.S. Mint in New Orleans. Co-hosted "Race: A Millennial Generation's Perspective" facilitated discussions on college campuses

2012

- Hosted the annual conference of the International Association of Human Rights Agencies, August 5-8, 2012
- Met the EEOC contract of 95 cases

2013

- Attended EEOC conference in Denver, Co. that focused on national origin and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders wage discrimination
- Completed EEOC contract of 84 cases
- To improve efficiency, transitioned the LCHR office from paper to electronic records and created a case investigation training manual

2014

- Employment Discrimination Laws covering Retaliatory actions and Equal Pay for Women against employees were signed into law
- Fulfilled the EEOC contract. Resolved 100 cases, including five mediations resulting in \$190,480

2015

- LCHR closed the contracted number of 92 cases for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, with six settlements totaling \$28,300
- Held conference "Celebrating 50 Years of Civil Rights – From History to Fate: Protecting the Rights of All Citizens" in New Orleans
- Conducted outreach programs focusing on incarcerated persons, immigrant and migrant populations, and LGBT communities
- Hosted women leaders from eleven African nations as part of the International Visitors Leadership Program

Challenges to Sustainability

The Louisiana Commission on Human Rights is respected as a high-performing agency that provides professional services to the public. This is evidenced by the agency's ability to meet EEOC's standards in investigating and resolving employment discrimination complaints.

LCHR's commitment to quality improvement initiatives and ongoing staff training help ensure thorough and efficient case investigations. In addition, partnerships have been established to support LCHR's outreach and educational efforts.

Yet, these activities alone cannot override the challenges LCHR faces in the following areas:

- Ensuring a full complement of commission members to maintain a quorum thus enabling regular meetings to occur. Presently, there are four vacancies on the Commission.
- Obtaining proper position designations and commensurate salaries for the executive assistant and the administrative assistant, both of whom function not in the capacity of support staff but rather in the capacity of program management and compliance. The executive assistant is the enforcement manager and is responsible for upholding the state statutes. The administrative assistant serves as the intake officer and is responsible for interacting with all citizens who contact the office to file a complaint of discrimination, completing intake forms and preparing case files for investigations. Neither the executive assistant nor the administrative assistant has salaries that are commensurate with their responsibilities. Turnovers have been frequent, and since 2012, five persons have assumed the position of executive assistant.
- Securing consistency in investigative staff. Part-time equal opportunity specialists and law clerks provide intake and investigative services. However, turnover is a consistent issue which compounds our ability to retain trained individuals who are knowledgeable of investigative procedures and laws pertaining to human and civil rights.

We remain committed to addressing these issues, and we are driven to demonstrate the attributes of our motto "**Efficiency, Consistency and Responsibility**" in everything we do.

LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EXECUTIVE STAFF



(L-R | Back) George Simpson (Former Executive Assistant/EO Supervisor), Marlene B. Miller, (Standing Executive Assistant/EO Supervisor); Christa Davis (Administrative Assistant/Intake Officer); Jameil Peterson, Esq. (Former Executive Assistant, EO Supervisor); (L-R | Front) Loyce Pierce Wright, M.Ed. (Executive Director); James Roberts, J.D. (Law Clerk); (Not Pictured: Natalie Blackman, Esq. (Former Executive Assistant, EO Supervisor); and Leah Raby, Ph.D. (Former Executive Assistant)

Louisiana Commission on Human Rights

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